14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

Sugar Beet[14]

Sugar beet, though introduced only recently, is becoming an increasingly important crop. The sugar factory established in Homs has brought in seed from the Netherlands and Germany and distributed it to farmers. The reclamation and irrigation of the Roudj and the Ghab will undoubtedly give a great fillip to sugar beet cultivation and raise average yields, for beets do best on irrigated land. At present yields are still disappointingly low compared to those achieved in Western Europe and the United States. The mission suggests that efforts be particularly devoted to selecting a series of varieties with a wide range in maturity, so that the operating season at the Homs factory can be considerably prolonged. In the Euphrates and Khabour river valleys there are areas suitable for beet cultivation which can obviously not be served by the Homs plant. Ultimately the establishment of additional factories in these areas may prove worthwhile. Although the cost of producing beet sugar in Syria is undoubtedly higher than the cost of importing raw sugar (which is principally if not wholly cane sugar), the cultivation of beets has beneficial effects on the soil which appear to warrant its encouragement.

Tobacco

Tobacco is a minor crop, though important as a source of government revenue and of farm income in the province of Latakia, where it is predominantly grown. It is one of the crops, however, which is most in need of improvement. Seed selection, curing and grading all leave much to be desired. The entire plant, rather than selected leaves, is often harvested at one time. The Tobacco Monopoly, which licenses the growers, has paid little attention to the improvement of methods. The mission suggests that the Monopoly devote an additional sum of at least £S 75,000 annually to this purpose. At present three varieties of tobacco are grown: Abou Riha, the so-called "Latakia tobacco," which is bought almost entirely by a single American cigarette manufacturer for blending; Chek-el-Bint, used in the manufacture of Syrian cigarettes; and Tombac, produced for water-pipe smoking. In view of the rather uncertain market for Abou Riha, it would appear wise to develop the production of high-aromatic tobacco of the Turkish or Macedonian type for which a more durable market seems

[14] See Annex C, p. 308.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

assured. The possibility of growing Virginia-type tobaccos should also be explored.

Orchards and Vineyards

Vineyards and orchard crops such as olives, nuts, apricots and other fruits already make an important contribution to agricultural income. Both the quality and the yield could be substantially raised by proper insect control, the use of fertilizers and tracer elements, and better pruning. Many existing orchards need rejuvenation. Heavy frosts in 1949-50 severely damaged olive orchards around Aleppo, so that Syria is now on a net import basis for olive oil. Establishment of vineyards and orchards in the Djebel Druze would help materially to raise the present low level of income in that region. In Latakia province the cultivation of citrus could be significantly increased. The availability of ample long-term credit at low interest rates is especially important for an expansion and rejuvenation of orchards and vineyards.

Vegetables

Vegetable growing in wide variety is concentrated in and around the larger population centers. The fact that so little is grown and consumed in the rural areas is due mainly to the fact that neither the small farmer nor the majority of consumers yet knows the value of a balanced diet; on the contrary, both hold vegetable cultivation in low esteem. Education and guidance centered upon the establishment of school gardens might do much to change this attitude.

The significant quantity of vegetables at present used by the local canning industry could easily be doubled though, as the canners explained to the mission, the poor quality of vegetables in general, and of peas and beans in particular, tends to limit the quantity suitable for processing. Better seed, improved cultural practices and adequate insect control measures could contribute greatly to higher quality and quantity. Improved transport, storage and marketing facilities should be included in community and cooperative development schemes, thus opening up possibilities for more exports and a very substantial increase in the activity of the local canning industry which at present produces about 4,000 tons of canned goods.

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248 4. *Gradual reduction of cotton cultivation in dry-farming areas.* Cotton growing under dry-farming conditions is too hazardous in Syria.

5. *Selection of cotton growing areas and permanent restriction to these regions.*

6. *Rotation plan.* Introduction of rotation without the customary fallow, e.g.:

1st year: cotton, green fodder mixed with barley; or cotton, wheat.

2nd year: maize, sorghum, green manure; or wheat, fodder crops.

3rd year: early peanuts, wheat mixed with leguminous plants or horse-beans; sorghum.

7. *Establishment of cotton grower associations.*

249 IV SUGAR BEET

In 1953-54 the cultivated area, mainly around Homs and Damascus, amounted to 4,200 hectares of irrigated land and about 2,000 hectares of rainfed land, generally divided into small plots of a few hectares and worked manually. The price of £S 60 per ton of beets delivered at the Homs factory makes cultivation very attractive, even to farmers at some distance from the factory and despite high labor costs. Maximum transport cost from producer to factory was, at the time of the mission's visit, £S 9 per ton. Seeds from Holland and Germany were provided without cost by the Sugar and Agricultural Products Company until 1953; since then the farmer has had to meet half of the cost of £S 117 per kg. Some farmers are thus inclined to produce their own seed, although ideally this should be undertaken only by experts.

The mission makes the following recommendations with respect to sugar beet:

1. Expansion of production should be sought mainly in irrigated areas. Careful account should be taken of all planting and climatic conditions since they directly affect sugar content; hot days and cool nights are a favorable influence.

2. The selection and development of an early-maturing type adaptable to Syrian conditions should be considered.

3. Sugar beet growing in rainfed regions with less than 600 mm. rainfall should be transferred to partly or fully irrigated land. It can rely on the abundant late winter and spring rains for partial irrigation.

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

4. Mixed farming should be promoted in sugar beet areas. The cash return from sugar beet production is three to six times larger than that from wheat and other crops. Moreover, the leaves from one hectare of sugar beet make an excellent silage fodder, equivalent to about 4.5 tons of good hay.

v CROP DIVERSIFICATION

Practically all temperate and many subtropical crops can be and are grown in Syria. Their distribution, however, is very poor. The mission strongly emphasizes the desirability of a wider diversification to lessen the risks and to ensure a better use of available land and manpower. In nearly all the rainfed zones leguminous fodder crops could be substituted for the customary fallow. These would provide the soil with needed nitrogen, improve its structure and serve as fodder. If livestock were adequately fed for a single season, human food production would probably thereby be increased, indirectly, to a greater extent and sooner than if the land were sown to crops for human consumption. An increase in livestock, particularly in irrigated zones but also in the rainfed area, means fuller employment and higher income for the rural population.

To supplement winter vetch and berseem, the mission suggests the introduction for field trials of the cluster bean (*Cyanopsia sp. sp.*), a grain and forage plant widely cultivated in Sicily; some of the varieties can be grown with sorghum. In addition there is the possibility of goat's rue (*Galega orientalis*), a bushy, erect perennial herb of high nutritive value, and of sulla (*Hedysarum coronarium*), which can be used as green fodder or hay and which ranks with red clover in nutritive value. The latter grows best in deep, rich calcareous soils, but can also be grown in poor soil if it contains lime. Sulla can be sown alone, with cereals, or in mixtures with other legumes; it yields up to 120 tons of green matter per hectare under irrigation, and it may produce from 16-50 tons even on non-irrigated land.[6] Trials to reseed a wild species of alfalfa, reported to grow in the Anti-Lebanon region, should be undertaken in other areas. Cultivated lucerne and alfalfa (*Medicago sp. sp.*) have responded successfully; their more extensive cultivation should be encouraged. Of the 50 or more species the most common is *Medicago sativa* and *M. varia*, of which many strains are

[6] FAO publication, *Legumes in Agriculture*.

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مساحات ومحاصيل اهم انواع الخضار ١٩٥٠/١٩٥١ — ١٩٥٢/١٩٥٣
(المساحة بالهكتار والمحصول بالطن)

AREA AND PRODUCTION OF PRINCIPAL VEGETABLES, 1950/51 — 1952/53.
(Area in hectars, produce in tons)

Table No. 5

جدول رقم ٥

Vegetables	١٩٥٠/١٩٥١ 1950/1951		١٩٥١/١٩٥٢ 1951/1952		١٩٥٢/١٩٥٣ 1952/1953		النوع
	المساحة Area	المحصول Produce	المساحة Area	المحصول Produce	المساحة Area	المحصول Produce	
Potatoes	3,687	36,615	3,587	38,226	3,058	32,294	بطاطا
Garlic	1,144	4,548	906	4,018	1,185	4,326	ثوم
Onions	4,043	39,745	4,169	33,135	4,454	36,830	بصل
Onion seeds	228	388	202	52	210	42	بادرون
Onion sets	635	1,136	721	2,299	749	3,867	فرخ
Tomatoes	6,338	67,438	7,655	66,733	8,941	71,038	بندورة
Eggplant	2,742	34,996	3,670	34,905	3,728	28,403	باذنجان

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مساحات ومحاصيل النباتات الصناعية ١٩٥٠/١٩٥١ — ١٩٥٢/١٩٥٣
(المساحة بالهكتار والمحصول بالطن)

AREA AND PRODUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL CORPS, 1950/51 — 1952/53.
(Area in hectars, produce in tons)

Table No. 6

جدول رقم ٦

Plantation	١٩٥٠/١٩٥١ 1950/1951		١٩٥١/١٩٥٢ 1951/1952		١٩٥٢/١٩٥٣ 1952/1953		النوع
	المساحة Area	المحصول Produce	المساحة Area	المحصول Produce	المساحة Area	المحصول Produce	
Sugar cane	86	349	119	5,033	138	4,080	قصب السكر
Tobacco	4,026	4,164	3,951	3,894	2,082	1,669	تبغ
Tombac	391	351	355	362	317	253	تنباك
Cotton	217,352	62,934	189,271	58,074	127,558	46,964	قطن (شعر)
Linseed	180	180	220	220	533	533	كتان (بزر)
Hemp	3,330	3,383	4,292	4,131	4,038	2,172	قنب (الياف)
Tobacco (shak-el-bint)	3,936	3,090	3,296	2,234	3,309	2,820	تبغ شاك البنت
Sugar beet	211	2,715	2,624	55,320	4,264	49,572	الشوندر السكري